

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00498 01 OF 02 271141Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 IO-13 OMB-01 /070 W

-----271220Z 065784 /13

R 271421Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 315

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0498

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS

SUBJECT: JORDAN-WEST BANK RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ODEH WHO HEADS GOJ OFFICE CONCERNED WITH WEST BANK MATTERS BELIEVES TIME RIPE FOR JORDAN TO INCREASE INFLUENCE ON WEST BANK. HE THINKS WEST BANKERS WILL ATTRIBUTE "INEVITABLE FAILURE" OF GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE TO PLO AS STUMBLING BLOCK, AND GOJ SHOULD POSITION ITSELF TO CAPITALIZE ON THAT DEVELOPMENT BY STARTING NOW TO INCREASE ITS PRESENCE ON WEST BANK. ODEH BELIEVES PLO SOUGHT DIALOGUE WITH GOJ BECAUSE OF RECENT INDICATIONS BY SADAT AND ASAD THAT THERE SHOULD BE POST-SETTLEMENT TIES BETWEEN WEST BANK PALESTINE STATE AND JORDAN, AND BECAUSE RECENT VISIT OF HEBRON EX-MAYOR JA-BARI WAS SIGNAL THAT JORDAN HAS AT LEAST IMPORTANT NUISANCE VALUE CONSTITUENCY ON WEST BANK. ODEH THINKS PALESTINE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING WILL BE DELAYED BECAUSE ISRAELI ELECTIONS IN MAY HAVE POSTPONED START OF PEACE CONFERENCE AND THUS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 AMMAN 00498 01 OF 02 271141Z

REDUCED PRESSURE ON PLO TO GET ITS HOUSE IN ORDER. HE BELIEVES ISRAEL COULD QUICKLY REVERSE WORLD OPINION NOW AGAINST IT BY ACCEPTING PLO AT GENEVA AND DEMANDING FULL AND NORMAL PEACE AS GOI DEFINES IT. FURTHER, ODEH THINKS EGYPT AND JORDAN AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, SYRIA WOULD PROCEED ON THAT BASIS. WHILE ODEH IS OUT IN FRONT OF MOST JORDANIANS IN HIS VIEW OF ACTIVIST

GOJ ROLE ON WEST BANK, HE IS INTELLIGENT, ARTICULATE AND ENERGETIC VOICE ON SIDE OF THOSE JORDANIANS TRYING TO PERSUADE KING TO ACT MORE BOLDLY VIS-A-VIS PLO AND WEST BANK. END SUMMARY.

2. JERUSALEM CONSUL-GENERAL NEWLIN DURING AMMAN VISIT CALLED ON GOJ MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ABU ODEH WHO ALSO HEADS GOJ OFFICE CONCERNED WITH WEST BANK MATTERS. ODEH AGREED NEWLIN CALL, WHICH MADE IN COMPANY OF ACTING DCM, WOULD REMAIN UNPUBLICIZED.

3. ODEH, IN HIS TYPICALLY UPBEAT, POSITIVE VIEW ABOUT JORDAN'S PROSPECTS FOR RE-ESTABLISHING POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON WEST BANK, SAID HE BELIEVES WEST BANK POLITICAL ATTITUDES, LIKE THOSE IN MIDDLE EAST AT LARGE, CURRENTLY IN STATE OF FLUX. ACCORDING TO HIM, HIGHLY PUBLICIZED RECENT VISIT TO AMMAN OF HEBRON EX-MAYOR JA'BARI WAS A USEFUL REMINDER TO ALL CONCERNED THAT KING HUSSEIN HAS CERTAIN POLITICAL ASSETS ON WEST BANK, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE LARGELY INACTIVE AT PRESENT. (ODEH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR RED CARPET, HIGH VISIBILITY NATURE OF JA'BARI'S VISIT.) HOWEVER, SADAT'S WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW FAVORING RESUMED TIES BETWEEN JORDAN AND WEST BANK (ALBEIT AS PALESTINE "STATE") AND JORDAN-EGYPTIAN RAPPROCHEMENT ADDED TO EXISTING IMPROVED JORDAN-SYRIA TIES, AND GAVE KING HUSSEIN'S REGIME INCREASED STATURE AS POTENTIAL PARTNER AGAIN WITH WEST BANK. AS INDICATION OF TREND TOWARD MORE FAVORABLE VIEW OF GOJ EVEN AMONG

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 AMMAN 00498 01 OF 02 271141Z

WEST BANK NEW POLITICAL LEADERS, ODEH REVEALED HE RECENTLY RECEIVED FEELERS FROM NABLUS MAYOR BASSAM SHAKKA ABOUT "OFFICIAL" VISIT TO AMMAN. AS NEWLIN WAS LEAVING ODEH'S OFFICE, MAYOR ALTRUSH OF BEIT SAHOUR ON WEST BANK WAS OBSERVED IN WAITING ROOM.

4. CONTINUING HIS OPTIMISM, ODEH PRESENTED ARGUMENT THAT "INEVITABLE FAILURE" OF GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF PLO INTRANSIGENCE ACTUALLY WILL HELP JORDAN'S RENEWED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE ON WEST BANK. THIS WOULD BE TRUE, HE ARGUED, BECAUSE WEST BANKERS WOULD ATTRIBUTE FAILURE OF PEACE EFFORTS TO PLO AS STUMBLING BLOCK. GOJ, HE CONTINUED, SHOULD BEGIN NOW TO THINK HOW IT CAN BEST CAPITALIZE ON THAT CONSEQUENCE OF FAILURE AT GENEVA. ONE WAY TO DO SO, ODEH MAINTAINS, IS FOR JORDAN NOW TO MAKE ITS PRESENCE FELT INCREASINGLY ON WEST BANK--E.G., BY SELECTIVE LOANS AND GRANTS, RECEIVING SENIOR POLITICAL PERSONAGES, AND PERIODIC RESTATEMENT OF

COMMON TIES.

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 00498 02 OF 02 271217Z

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TRSE-00 /057 W

-----271219Z 066291 /13

R 261421Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 316

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 0498

5. ON RECENTLY INITIATED GOJ-PLO DIALOGUE, ODEH BELIEVES PLO STIMULATED TO SEEK ACCOMMODATION FOR NUMBER OF REASONS, INCLUDING SADAT WASHINGTON POST INTERVIEW, SADAT-HUSSEIN COMMUNIQUE, AND ASAD TIME INTERVIEW, ALL OF WHICH REFERRED TO PROSPECTIVE TIES BETWEEN JORDAN AND POSSIBLE WEST BANK PALESTINIAN STATE. IN ADDITION, ACCORDING TO ODEH, GOJ'S "SIGNAL" THROUGH JA'BARI'S VISIT THAT JORDAN HAS AT LEAST IMPORTANT NUISANCE VALUE CONSTITUENCY ON WEST BANK HELPED BRING PLO TO VIEW THAT IT MUST COME TO SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH KING HUSSEIN IF PLO IS SERIOUS ABOUT REPRESENTING WEST BANK AT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, NOT TO MENTION GOVERNING THAT TERRITORY AS A PALESTINIAN "STATE." ODEH BELIEVES LATTER PROSPECT REMOTE; EITHER FAILURE AT GENEVA WOULD LEAD WEST BANKERS TO REJECT PLO AS STUMBLING BLOCK TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL (PARA 3 ABOVE) OR SUCCESS OF PEACE CONFERENCE WOULD FIRST REQUIRE PLO TO COMPROMISE ITSELF OUT OF EXISTANCE.

6. ODEH UNDERSTANDS PALESTINE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH REPORTEDLY TO MEET IN FEBRUARY MAY BE POSTPONED BECAUSE
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PAGE 02 AMMAN 00498 02 OF 02 271217Z

DECISION TO HOLD ISRAELI ELECTIONS IN MAY HAS DELAYED
START OF ANY PEACE CONFERENCE AND, THUS, REDUCED
PRESSURE ON PLO TO GET ITS HOUSE IN ORDER.

7. ISRAELIS, ODEH BELIEVES, CURRENTLY ON DEFENSE IN
WORLD OPINION OVER THEIR REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH PLO,
COULD SMASH BALL INTO ARABS' COURT BY ACCEPTING PLO
AT GENEVA AND DEMANDING FULL AND NORMAL PEACE AS GOI
HAS BEEN DEFINING IT--A DEMAND WHICH HE SAYS WORLD
OPINION WOULD THEN SUPPORT. ODEH CLAIMS EGYPT AND
JORDAN READY TO ACCEPT NEGOTIATIONS ON THAT BASIS,
AND SYRIA WOULD BE PREPARED TO RESPOND WITH SOME
INITIAL CONCILIARY GESTURE--E.G., ENDING SECONDARY
BOYCOTT. IN AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION LATER ON
SAME DAY, ABU ODEH EXPRESSED VIEW ARABS SHOULD SEEK
"INTERACTIVE PEACE" WITH ISRAEL WHICH WOULD FACILITATE
ISRAEL'S INTEGRATION INTO MIDDLE EAST.

8. COMMENT: ODEH BELIEVES GOJ CAN BE MORE SUCCESS-
FULLY ASSERTIVE IN RE-ESTABLISHING STRONG POLITICAL
INFLUENCE ON WEST BANK THAN MOST JORDANIANS THINK IS
POSSIBLE NOW, OR THAN MANY EAST BANKERS WANT.
ODEH IS INTELLIGENT, ARTICULATE, AND ENERGETIC VOICE
JOINING THOSE WHO TRYING TO PERSUADE KING TO ACT MORE
BOLDLY IN PURSUING JORDAN'S INTERESTS VIS-A-VIS PLO
IN PEACE PROCESS REGARDING WEST BANK AND APPARENTLY
HAD SOME SUCCESS IN PERSUADING KING TO HANDLE
JA'BARI VISIT AS HE DID.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, WEST BANK
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977AMMAN00498
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770029-0820
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770114/aaaaamdi.tel
Line Count: 201
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 49d338d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3490521
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JORDAN-WEST BANK RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/49d338d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009